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Ken Atchison  
Headquarters, Washington, D.C.  
(Phone: 202/755-2497)

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## NASA TO CHANGE TRACKING AND DATA ACQUISITION OPERATIONS

NASA plans to change its space tracking and data acquisition activities when the Space Shuttle and the Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System become operational in the 1980s.

The plans are a result of a study of responsibilities at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., for tracking and data systems activities. The changes are intended to insure that tracking stations and network operations will be managed most efficiently and effectively using both government and contractor personnel and resources.

The Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System in 1982 will take over all of the tracking and data acquisition support of low Earth-orbiting spacecraft.

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At that time, the Spaceflight Tracking and Data Network, NASA's worldwide network of tracking stations, will be closed, with the following exceptions:

- The Alaska station will be retained until Landsat 3 becomes inoperative, anticipated in 1984.
- The Goddard station will be retained until the International Ultraviolet Explorer spacecraft becomes inoperative, anticipated in the mid-1980s.
- The Merritt Island, Fla., and Bermuda stations will be converted to launch support and range safety facilities.
- The Goldstone, Calif., Australian and Spanish stations will be retained for support of geosynchronous and highly elliptical orbit spacecraft.

The Rosman, N.C., facility expects to cease operations in January 1981. The facility had been supporting the Applications Technology Satellite-6, which is no longer operating, and the Orbiting Astronomical Observatory, which will complete its mission in November 1980. The Rosman station is operated for NASA by the Bendix Field Engineering Corp., which employs about 120 people at the site.

The stations to be closed in 1982 include Hawaii; Guam; Quito, Ecuador; and Santiago, Chile. The station in Winkfield, England, will be closed in 1980.

The Spaceflight Tracking and Data Network capabilities of the Goldstone, Australian and Spanish stations are similar to those required for the Deep Space Network stations at the same locations. Combining the capabilities at each station will achieve more efficient use of the facilities, and save money. The facilities at Goldstone, Australia and Spain will be consolidated into a network under management of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., in 1983-1985.

Ten years ago there were approximately 1,200 Civil Service employees in the development, implementation and operation of tracking and data systems at Goddard for support of both manned and unmanned spacecraft. Since then, many of the functions have become routine contractor operations so that today, approximately 650 Civil Service people are assigned to tracking and data systems work, including the management and coordination of some 30 operations contracts.

The Goddard study has shown that consolidation and restructuring of the contracts into approximately six contracts in the 1982-1983 period would result in a more effective and efficient blend of government and industry performance.

The government work will focus on mission planning, technology development and systems engineering. Contractors will be responsible for operational tasks.

As a result, the Civil Service complement devoted to tracking and data systems at Goddard will be reduced between 1980 and 1986 by about 225, at a rate of about 35 to 40 each year. At the same time, Civil Service personnel requirements in other Goddard programs are expected to increase at about the same rate and the displaced tracking and data employees can move into the new positions.

About 5,300 contractor personnel are employed in Goddard tracking and data system work around the world. The effect of these actions will be to reduce this number over the next five years by about 2,300, including 900 in the Washington-Baltimore area and 1,400, 500 of whom are foreign nationals, at Space Tracking and Data Network facilities around the world.

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